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HD **Many young people 'frightened' by climate change: Poll**

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Survey reveals distress felt as a result of climate change; some blame govt inaction

Three-quarters of young people surveyed in 10 countries have admitted to being "frightened" about their future because of climate change.

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More than 45 per cent said their feelings, including thoughts of distress or anxiety, spilled over and affected their daily lives and functioning.

Almost four in 10 said they were hesitant to have children as a result of the climate crisis.

The survey, led by researchers at Britain's Bath University, gathered responses from more than 10,000 people aged between 16 and 25 from, among others, the United States, Britain, Australia as well as India and the Philippines.

In a report that accompanied the survey, the researchers linked the anxiety young people felt about climate change to their perceptions of how governments were failing to respond adequately to it, with many respondents viewing this as an act of "abandonment".

Around 65 per cent felt governments were failing young people. Ms Mitzi Tan, 23, a climate activist from the Philippines where flooding and ever more intense typhoons are regular events, said: "I grew up being afraid of drowning in my own bedroom."

"Society tells me that this anxiety is an irrational fear that needs to be overcome - one that meditation and healthy coping mechanisms will 'fix'. At its root, our climate anxiety comes from this deep-set feeling of betrayal because of government inaction," she added.

Mr Earl Eleazar, an undergraduate from the University of the Philippines Diliman, who wants to pursue a career in conservation biology, said: "The world has enough problems as it is. I want to focus on both my career and make sure I can do my part in helping mitigate the effects of the worsening climate before thinking about raising kids."

The researchers in the survey said it was one of the biggest that looked into young people's attitudes about the climate crisis, adding that the findings should be a call to action for governments around the world.

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"This study paints a horrific picture of widespread climate anxiety in our children and young people. It suggests for the first time that high levels of psychological distress in youth is linked to government inaction," said Dr Caroline Hickman from the University of Bath and co-lead author on the study.

"Our children's anxiety is a completely rational reaction given the inadequate responses to climate change they are seeing from governments. What more do governments need to hear to take action?"

Results from the survey add on to previous polls that found high levels of "environment anxiety" among younger people than other populations. Last year, Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists found that child and adolescent psychiatrists in England had been seeing more patients distressed about ecological issues.

The organisation drew up a list of signs one may be suffering from "eco-distress", including a low mood, sense of helplessness, anger, insomnia and guilt.

Mr Eleazar, 19, said: "I already don't get to see the stars in the sky from when I was younger... from pollution... it bothers me because I haven't been alive for two decades yet and I can already see differences from my childhood.

"What more when I grow up and the environment gets even worse, even faster?"

The findings of the Bath University survey corresponded with another conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 17 advanced countries, including Singapore.

The Pew survey, which involved more than 16,000 people and was published on Tuesday, found that young adults were more concerned about climate change than older adults.

CO unbath : University of Bath

NS gclimt : Climate Change | gcat : Political/General News | genv : Natural Environment | gglobe : Global/World Issues

RE uk : United Kingdom | eurz : Europe | weurz : Western Europe

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